(b) whether it is a fact that rate of growth projections of agriculture are near the 2 per cent figure;

(c) the reason for this laggard rate of growth of agriculture;

(d) the contribution of live-stock in the projected growth; and

(e) the contribution of marine and inland fisheries in this projected growth of agriculture for 2006-07?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (e) According to advance estimates of National Income released by Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), the growth rate of agriculture including allied sectors of forestry, logging and fishing in real terms (at 1999-2000 prices) for the year 2006-07 is 2.7 per cent, compared to 6.0 per cent in 2005-06. The growth rate of 2.7 per cent in 2006-07 is upon the base of growth rate at 6.0 per cent in 2005-06. The contributions of livestock, marine and inland fisheries in the growth rate for 2006-07 have not been worked out by the CSO separately.

Coconut production

443. MS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that coconut trees in Keraia are too old and their productivity has declined considerably;

(b) if so, how Government propose to increase their productivity;

(c) whether Government are keen to improve the coconut yield;

(d) the number of families in the country totally dependent on coconut cultivation;

(e) whether Government plan to increase the coconut plantation; and

(f) why the Coconut Board wastes its precious resources having offices like in Baster where coconut trees do not normally grow?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir. It is estimated that about 25-33% of coconut trees in Kerala are old & senile and the productivity is on the decline.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The Coconut Development Board setup by the Government of India in 1981 for the integrated development of coconut cultivation and industry in India is implementing various programmes to improve productivity, including production and distribution of quality planting material and improved cultivars, productivity improvement by management of disease affected palms and by providing financial assistance for setting up of organic manure units and laying out of demonstration plots.

(d) It is estimated that approximately 5 million farm families in the country depend on coconut cultivation.

(e) Yes, Sir. The Government proposes to increase coconut production by focusing on productivity improvement and expansion of area in potential states.

(f) As a part of the programme for expanding coconut to non-traditional areas, the Board had started a State Centre Office at Raipur during the year 1985-86. However, due to the limited scope for implementation of the CDB's schemes in the state of Madhya Pradesh, the office was subsequently merged with the Demonstration cum Seed Production farm Kondagaon, Bastar District, during 1989-90. The farm is being maintained as a Demonstration cum Seed Production Farm to meet the requirement of seedlings of farmers and also for transfer of technologies for scientific coconut cultivation in non-traditional areas.

Financial support for small rural industries

444. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any scheme for the poor villagers for financial support to avoid bank loans at higher rates of interest, to start their own small industries;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have any plan to launch such scheme for encouraging entrepreneurs to start rural industries from Government funds; and